News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Monday, September 18, 2006

Wyoming West Nile Virus Cases Pass 50

CHEYENNE ó The number of reported West Nile virus infections in Wyoming has jumped up to 52 for this year, according to the Wyoming Department of Health.

Thirty-seven of the cases, including the one reported death, have been from Fremont County. There have also been five cases in Goshen County, two in Big Horn County, two in Washakie County, and one each in Natrona, Platte and Lincoln counties. The home location for other cases is still being identified.

In 2005, there were 12 West Nile virus infections statewide with two deaths. There were 10 cases with no deaths in 2004. The most active year by far in Wyoming has been 2003 with 393 cases and nine deaths.

At least 10 of the 2006 cases have involved West Nile neuroinvasive disease (meningitis or encephalitis) with symptoms such as severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis. Most people who develop clinical illness as a result of the virus experience West Nile fever with symptoms including fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes.

People experiencing West Nile virus-related symptoms should contact a healthcare provider for treatment and testing. The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory offers free West Nile virus testing to healthcare providers for suspected cases.

More information on West Nile virus, including prevention strategies, is available on the web at www.badskeeter.org or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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